

CLIMBING JOURNALS.

THE re-opening of Skye to the climber has to many of our members been an item of news more important than most and it has been heralded by articles in several of the recent mountaineering journals. Their appearance has been welcome, as there always seems to be more interest in those articles which deal with areas accessible to the reader, compared with accounts of expeditions of a similar standard elsewhere. "Sligachan and some Early Visitors," by G. D. Valentine, and "The Spring Cuillin," by J. D. B. Watson, are to be found in the *S.M.C. Journal*, Nos. 134 and 135, whilst *The Alpine Journal*, No. 269, has an article on Skye by Peter Bicknell. When read to the Alpine Club, this article, which gives some account of Norman Collie's influence in Skye, was illustrated by his slides, now the property of the Alpine Club, but unfortunately only two of them are reproduced. *The Alpine Journal*, No. 267, has H. MacRobert's account of "Ski Mountaineering in Scotland," a title which emphasises the fact that one generally has to be prepared to climb high to get good snow. The supremacy of the Cairngorm plateaux as Scotland's best ski-ing ground is recognised in this article, whilst "A Cairngorm Holiday," by T. Aron (*Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1944), describes an Easter ski-ing holiday in this district. In the same journal R. H. Goody gives a few hints on summer visits, advising, for instance, the replenishment of the larder from the ptarmigan at the Pools of Dee by means of a catapult, a scheme which we cannot commend!

"Our Eagles and their Prey," by G. D. Valentine (*S.M.C. Journal*, No. 134), brings the realisation that the zoology and perhaps also the botany of our local hills has been somewhat neglected of late—rather surprisingly, as space in the journals is not so scarce as it was when new ascents were plentiful and tended to crowd out all else. Opportunity is, however, being taken to publish "guide book" articles on some of the lesser areas, as, for instance, "The Moorfoot Hills" (R. M. Gall Inglis), "Some Glen Almond Climbs" (M. B. Nettleton and J. H. B. Bell), "Coast and Hill Paths around the Firth of Clyde" (B. H. Humble)—all *S.M.C. Journal*, No. 134; "Ben A'an" (J. B. Nimlin), "New Climbs in Arran" (G. C. Curtis and G. H. Townend), in *S.M.C. Journal*, No. 135, which also includes "Recent Rock Climbs on Ben Nevis," by B. P. Kellett.

A detailed account of an area across the border is "Three Cliffs in Llanberis," by J. E. Q. Barford, in *Climbers' Club Journal*, 1944, which also debunks the rigid classification of climbs in "Hardly VII G Minus," by E. H. L. Wigram. In the same journal, too, is an article of possible local application, "Winter Camping in British Mountains," by J. M. Béchervaise.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club (No. 38) is, as ever, good reading, whether it be "Birkness Day," by E. Banner Mendus, an account of a new climb obviously written for reading, "The Little Melody," by F. H. F. Simpson, which might be classified as philosophy of climbing, or Arnold Lunn's "Discovery of Mountain Beauty." The same author gives selections from his forthcoming anthology on Switzerland in English prose and poetry in the *Climbers' Club Journal*, 1944, and writes on "The Wordsworths and Switzerland," in *Alpine Journal*, No. 268.

"James David Forbes," by E. H. Stevens (*Alpine Journal*, No. 269), is an account of a Scots scientist who pioneered many of the routes in the Alps and whose books are not as widely read as they might be—they are to be found in the Club Library! Geoffrey Winthrop Young writes (*Alpine Journal*, No. 267) not of one pioneer but of the "Mountain Prophets"—Leslie Stephen, A. W. Moore, Whympers, Freshfield, Coolidge, Dent, Conway, Slingsby, Collie, Mummery, Haskett-Smith—who influenced his own creed either by their writings—all were authors—or by personal contact. How many of our members have read even one book by each of them? Should an acquaintance with the literature of the hills be part of the Club qualification?

The three *Alpine Journals* under review include numerous other articles dealing generally with, or with parts of, the Alps, the Rockies, the Himalaya—in fact, to quote two of the titles, "From Norway to New Zealand," "With Memories of the Alps and the Congo." But it is impossible even to detail the individual titles and articles.

J. F. A. Burt's article on "The Scottish Mountains in Art" (*S.M.C. Journal*, No. 135) leads naturally to the photographs in the current batch of journals. There are many whose purpose is to illustrate a particular climb or even a particular pitch therein. These are of practical value and cannot be judged on artistic merit. If, however, a general aspect is portrayed, then the photograph should have some æsthetic quality, and this is lacking in very many of the illustrations being considered. The reviewer dislikes, too, the practice in one of the journals of printing without margins, as the trimming resulting from binding tends to upset the proportions of a picture and would in one instance, considered here, mutilate the legend. J. S. T. Gibson's "Bergschrund below President's Pass in the Rockies" has pleasing snow gradation (*Alpine Journal*, No. 269) and there is something indefinable in the quality of Collie's two photographs in the same journal. In the *S.M.C. Journal*, where reproduction still approaches pre-war standard, W. W. Weir's low key study of Loch Coruisk in No. 135 is particularly pleasing.

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